FIRST SEASON SUCCESS FOR FOC

A RESOUNDING SUCCESS! That’s how The Colorado Trail Foundation staff and volunteers describe the new George Miller Field Operations Center in Poncha Springs at the end of its first trail crew season.

The FOC, completed this spring and dedicated on June 2 (see photos of the celebration inside), is now the focal point for all Trail maintenance operations under the direction of CTF Field Operations Manager Brent Adams.

The facility’s namesake, George Miller, who was the CTF’s volunteer operations manager for two decades and has been a volunteer for nearly three, was instrumental in getting the FOC up and running, including leading a crew in May that put the finishing touches on the buildings and grounds in advance of the dedication.

“We are making good progress getting the facility organized so that everything has a place and can easily be accessed,” he noted recently about this “breaking-in” season.

“The FOC has been a great addition to our operations program on several fronts,” Miller added. “For trail crew support, it has made Brent’s work much easier and efficient, with shorter travel times in taking trailers to the crews. Also in making it easier to clean and restock between crews.”

Adams agrees whole-heartedly: “The FOC has made it much easier to inventory and maintain crew equipment,” he said. “In prior years, equipment and trailers were scattered at various locations around the state making that job much more difficult and time-consuming.

“In the new facility I was able to clean all of the cook stoves, test the burners, test all propane hoses and fittings for leaks, and repair those that were leaking. All of these things increase the efficiency and safety of our operations,” he noted as an example.

Also, “The FOC allowed me to unpack, clean and organize our crew trailers indoors over a period of days instead of in a single day outside like we did before, resulting in much more thorough attention to the equipment we are providing our volunteers. Having water service and a concrete slab allowed us to clean crew canopies and floors, which likely had never been done before.”

There are other benefits as well.

“The central location of the FOC gives Brent better access to several U.S. Forest Service offices for better communication with their personnel,” Miller said. “And with the crew season over, we can get the trailers ready for next year, regardless of the weather, in comfortable conditions.”

In addition, Miller said, the FOC has benefited the CTF’s trekking program by enabling Chris and Jeanne Szczech of Colorado Mountain Expeditions, who run the fully supported treks, to store supplies, food and vehicles at a central location near the Trail, saving both time and money.

The half-million dollar operations center is the largest single project ever undertaken by The Colorado Trail Foundation. Its dedication came 30 years after the late Gudy Gaskill, “Mother of The Colorado Trail,” led dedication ceremonies in Denver and Durango to commemorate completion of the Trail itself a year earlier.

The facility consists of a 1,600-square-foot main building that includes an office and storage and maintenance areas, and a 1,900-square-foot storage building that can house all of the CTF’s trail crew equipment and water tank trailers protected from the elements.
Fires Close CT for Part of Season

It was touch and go for the Colorado Trail users this summer after fires shut down parts of the CT near Durango for more than a month.

Two major fires, designated the 416 and Burro Fires, broke out in early June, forcing the closure of segments 25-28 (Molas Pass to Junction Creek Trailhead) from June 9 until July 12. For part of that time the entire San Juan National Forest, covering nearly 1.9 million acres (more than 2,900 square miles), was closed for the first time ever. By the time the fires were contained in late July nearly 60,000 acres had burned, making it one of the largest wildfires in Colorado history.

After the closures were announced, Colorado Trail Foundation staff leapt into action, fielding dozens of calls and posting updates on the CTF website and other social media sites to keep Trail users apprised of the latest information. Still, many hikers, bikers and riders planning extended trips on the Trail began their journeys not knowing whether the final segments of the Trail would be open by the time they reached them.

Fortunately, because most thru-hikers travel southbound from Denver and begin their hike after July 1, few were affected by the closure. Those who had to reroute were supplied additional resources, including ending their trip in Silverton rather than Durango.

“When authorities reopened the Colorado Trail on July 12, you could almost hear the collective cheer throughout the Internet,” said CTF Executive Director Bill Manning. “Many were able to go back to their original plan and continue hiking, or biking, all the way to Durango.”

Closures are not uncommon on the Trail, occurring every few years, but the length of this year’s was unusual. That change, according to long-range fire forecasters, as drought conditions and rising temperatures, including in southwestern Colorado, continue.

That makes it all the more important for Colorado Trail Foundation users to be aware of fire restrictions in the areas they plan to visit and be prepared. Here are some tips from the National Park Service:

- If you use a campfire, make sure it is fully extinguished before leaving the area; be sure it is cold to the touch.
- If you are using a portable stove, make sure the area is clear of grasses and other fine fuels. Prevent sources from tipping and starting a fire.
- Consider alternatives to campfires during periods of high fire danger.
- Practice Leave No Trace principles: pack out cigarette butts and burned materials from your camping area.
- If you see smoke or fire near the location as best you can and report it to authorities. Do not attempt to put out a fire by yourself.

(See the accompanying article on fire restrictions in Colorado.)

STOVE RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRAIL

If you are debating what type of stove to carry on The Colorado Trail, the decision might already have been made for you by public lands managers. Because of fire restrictions frequently issued during the hiking season in Colorado, it’s likely that a pressurized canister stove may be your only legal option.

THERE ARE TWO LEVELS OF RESTRICTIONS:

STAGE 1 bans, which are instituted nearly every summer on parts or all of The Colorado Trail, prohibit backcountry campers and the alcohol and twine stoves popular with ultralight backpackers.

STAGE 2 bans, which are even more restrictive and affect the entire CT in 2016, prohibit all types of backcountry stoves except for pressurized canister stoves. That means no alcohol, kerosene, fuel, white gas or other fuel stoves.

The restrictions stem in part from past incidents in Colorado. The 2012 Hewitt Gulch Fire in Poudre Canyon west of Fort Collins, for instance, was started by a camper whose alcohol stove tipped over and started the grass on fire. He tried to stamp it out, then took off when his efforts were unsuccessful.

Because fire safety is so important in Colorado’s drought-prone mountains, and because fire bans are difficult to predict, The Colorado Trail Foundation recommends that all thru-hikers carry a pressurized canister stove. They work well, are fuel efficient, and weigh only slightly more than other types of stoves.

THANK YOU, CTF

We love to hear from grateful Trail users. Here are a few recent comments:

“Thank you again for all you do. The CT is one of the most beautiful (and well-maintained) trails I have hiked on. That is because of (CTF staff and volunteers) who put so much into making the experience great.” – Wally Winner, Colorado Springs

“Thank you and all of the CTF volunteers for what you do! My thru-hike in 2016 was one of the best things in my life – ‘life affirming if not life changing,’ is how I typically put it. Made a couple of great friends, one of whom will be hiking some sections with me again this summer when I do the NOBO trek. Without the CTF, the Trail wouldn’t exist, and for that, I am happy to contribute. Of these years I plan on volunteering for some trail work, too.” – Jim Leiber, Jacksonville City, MO

“I called earlier this morning to get updates on the wildfires and water sources. I got disconnected before I had a chance to say thank you so much for your help and for doing the work that you do. You make it possible for so many of us to enjoy the Trail, and I greatly appreciate your support and advice.” – Natalie ‘Zinger’ Bothington, Palo Alto, CA.

The Colorado Trail Foundation
710 10th St., Room 210 Durango, CO 81301 Phone: 303-535-8729 (24-hour info line) Email: ctf@ColoradoTrail.org www.ColoradoTrail.org

Executive Director’s Update

With the new George Miller field operations center complete and serving our volunteers (and the Foundation’s sustainability), we will be having another ambitious project: a complete overhaul of The Colorado Trail web site and online presence. The current Colorado Trail Foundation website went live in 2004. Since then, volunteers and staff have delivered content to webmasters Valentina Miller of Dolomite Designs, who built the site and has maintained it for 15 years or more – an invaluable donation to the Trail and the Foundation. We can’t thank her enough.

Over the years, the website has scored well on many favorable reports by Trail users who’ve found it easy to navigate, highly searchable, involving, clean and readable. And, in keeping with everything we do at the Foundation, we’re trying to do it in the most cost-effective way possible.

We’re making good progress. We’ve chosen a website platform and are narrowing the framework, theme, forms and e-commerce choices to deliver both the look and ease of use that will serve us and our users well. But there is still a lot to do. Pages are being rewritten and photos found. Functionality is being expanded, including online registration for trail crews and a new blog that will greatly improve our ability to relay information about current Trail conditions.

The “go-live” date is not set yet, but the excitement is building for our “new look” website. Thanks to all who have donated their time and money to the Foundation; it is that support that enables us to do the work we do on behalf of the Trail.

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But 15 years is a long time in the web world and it’s time to update. Towards that end, earlier this year we assembled a website team of professionals, staff and volunteers, even as we were finishing the FOC. Goals were established, including making the site more smartphone and tablet friendly. We want the site to be easily navigable, highly searchable, involving, clean and readable. And, in keeping with everything we do at the Foundation, we’re trying to do it in the most cost-effective way possible.

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Tread Line is the newsletter of the Colorado Trail Foundation. It is published twice a year.

The Colorado Trail® is 486 miles long in the Rocky Mountains between Denver and Durango. It has been described as one of the best trails anywhere, one of the most scenic and among the best maintained. The Trail is a treasure of waterfalls, streams, mountains, bike and ride horseback.

The Colorado Trail Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation funded almost entirely by private sector individuals and companies. Our mission is to keep The Colorado Trail in good condition, maintaining and improving it with the help of many volunteers. We recruit trail volunteers, provide leadership, organize The Colorado Trail (“CT”) work crews, supply and support the crews, and manage the Adopt-A-Trail program to manage the Crews, supply and support the crews, and organize.

With the peak temperature of 98°F in the Denver area and 100°F in the high country, the summer hiking season is in full swing. The Colorado Trail Foundation is open for business.

The Trail is used by hikers, bikes and horseback riders. It is maintained by volunteer crews, corporations, and private land owners.

Steve Staley, Chair
Diana Bristol, Co-Chair
Jerry Brown, Vice Chair
Steve Tick, Treasurer
Amy Nelson, Director
Bill Manning, Director
Mark Your Calendar

DURANGO GATHERING, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Carver Brewing Co., 1022 Main Ave., Durango
HOLIDAY RECEPTION, 4:00-7:00 p.m., American Mountaineering Center, Golden.
21 Crews Take to the Trail

Here are the highlights:

CREW 0118 — ROSWELL CREEK, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 01
May 31-June 3. Bob Mathes, crew leader, and 12 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built a new bridge over Roswell Creek.

CREW 0218 — WEST BEAR CREEK, SEG. 1
June 7-10. Greg Speights, crew leader, and seven crew members. Major work accomplished: Built 24 new drains and removed loose rocks from trail tread.

CREW 0318 — BLANKS CABIN, SEG. 14

CREW 0418 — GOLD HILL, SEG. 7
June 23. Brent Adams and Anne Englert, crew leaders, and 28 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built 33 new drains and seven check dams and cleared 24 drains.

CREW 0518 — SHEEP GULCH, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 04

CREW 0618 — SOUTH COTTONWOOD CREEK, SEG. 13
June 28-July 1. Diana Breslin, crew leader, and 25 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built 28 new water bars, installed 10 check dams, and cleared 21 miles of washed out trail tread.

CREW 0718 — BOSWELL CREEK, SEG. 21
July 3-10. Dave Fritzwater, crew leader, and eight crew members. Major work accomplished: Installed 100 feet of new tread, constructed 300 yards of new trail, and armored 100 yards of trail.

CREW 1118 — ILLINOIS CREEK, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 02
July 21-25. Doug Buttery, crew leader, and 12 crew members. Major work accomplished: Constructed 200 feet of new tread and laid up 85 feet of wall below the Trail and 40 feet of wall above the Trail.

CREW 1218 — AVALANCHE GULCH, SEG. 13
July 21-27. Loren Woods, crew leader, and four crew members. Major work accomplished: Cleared and removed 62 drains, widened 1,200 feet of trail, built 10 new drains, repaired washed out trail.

CREW 1318 — KENOSHA PASS, SEG. 9
July 28. Brent Adams and Anne Englert, crew leaders, and 25 crew members. Major work accomplished: Constructed and cleaned approximately 70 drains.

CREW 1418 — ILLINOIS CREEK, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 03
July 28-Aug 3. Dave Landers, crew leader, and 10 crew members. Major work accomplished: 120 feet of new trail upgraded with rock stockpiles to build retaining walls.

CREW 1518 — PORCUPINE GULCH, SEG. 9
July 29-Aug. 2. Glenn Kyppler, crew leader, and 15 crew members. Major work accomplished: 1,065 feet of new tread installed, 20 check dams improved, and 10 new drains constructed.

CREW 1618 — MINERS CREEK, SEG. 7
Aug. 4-8. Bill Carpenter, crew leader, and 15 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built two new bridges on sills and installed or repaired 35 drains.

CREW 1718 — CATARACT CREEK, SEG. 8
Aug. 4-10. Paul Smith, crew leader, and four crew members. Major work accomplished: Improved drainage on eroding section of CT/CIDT.

CREW 1818 — STRAIGHT CREEK, SEG. 26
Aug. 11-17. Phil Ayers, crew leader, and 11 crew members. Major work accomplished: Removed 741 feet of washed out trail, armored four water crossings, widened 100 feet of washed out tread, and improved and cleared 12 drains.

CREW 1918 — CREE AND LOST CREEKS, SEG. 14
Aug. 19. Brent Adams and Anne Englert, crew leaders, and 16 crew members. Major work accomplished: Replaced washed-out culverts and rebuilt approaches and armored inlet and outlet; removed Aspen logs across Cee Creek and constructed 16-foot bridge with 30-inch tread.

CREW 2018 — TENMILE RANGE, SEG. 7
Aug. 24-26. Cindy Johnson, crew leader, and nine crew members. Major work accomplished: 35 new water bars installed, six water bars cleared, dead tree removed from trail, and two springs that crossed trail rehabilitated.

CREW 2118 — SOUTH CLEAR CREEK, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 02

NEW HARD HATS
GO GREEN

If you worked on a trail crew this summer or encountered one while on the Trail, you undoubtedly noticed the new apparel worn by crew members: forest green hard hats emblazoned with The Colorado Trail logo. They replaced the hodge-podge of old white hard hats that crews had been using for years.

Credit the CTF Operations Committee members (Brent Adams, John Lipe and Steve Stadler) for getting them designed, ordered and into the field in time for the trail season.

The response, they say, has been enthusiastic. “It’s something we’ve been talking about for a long time,” Stadler said, and they were happy to be able to introduce the distinctive hats during the inaugural season of the new George Miller Field Operations Center in Poncha Springs.
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CREW 0318 — BLANKS CABIN, SEG. 14
June 9-16. John and Elayna Lips, crew leaders, and 24 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built two swivels and one armored crossing, replaced two sign posts, and cleared multiple water diversions.

CREW 0418 — GOLD HILL, SEG. 7
June 23. Brent Adams and Anne Englert, crew leaders, and 28 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built 33 new drains and seven check dams and cleared 24 drains.

CREW 0518 — SHEEP GULCH, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 08
June 25-25. Cindy Johnson, crew leader, and 24 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built 28 water bars, installed four check steps, put in a retaining wall, removed a tree across the trail, and took out hundreds of aspen saplings.

CREW 0618 — SOUTH COTTONWOOD CREEK, SEG. 13
June 28-July 1. Dianna Breioli, crew leader, and 25 crew members. Major work accomplished: Constructed a 400-foot realignment and drains to improve entrenched area of the Trail.

CREW 0718 — MITCHELL CREEK SEG. 8
June 30. Brent Adams and Anne Englert, crew leaders, and 17 crew members. Major work accomplished: 41 drains cleaned or constructed and corridor cleared of willows and tree branches.

CREW 0818 — SAN LUIS PASS, SEG. 20-21

CREW 0918 — HANCOCK, COLLEGIATE W., SEG. 01
July 7-July 11. Scott Smith and Laura Bracero Smith, crew leaders, and 22 crew members. Major work accomplished: Built 1,100 feet of new trail, two 150-foot memo walls and a set of rock steps, and cleaned eight downed trees across the Trail.

CREW 1018 — LUJAN PASS, SEG. 17
July 34-21. Dave Fitzwater, crew leader, and eight crew members. Major work accomplished: Installed 107 drains, raked one mile of tread, constructed 300 yards of new tread, and armored 100 yards of trail.

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IT WAS A BIG TRAIL BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE YEAR ON THE COLORADO TRAIL, with 21 crews working up and down the Trail from West Bear Creek in the north to Straight Creek near Rico in the south.
He’s seen a lot of other changes on the Trail over the years. “This year’s hike was a lot different than previous hikes,” he said. “It has become much more of a social event due to the higher numbers of hikers.” For comparison, he offered a list of his previous thru-hikes and the number of reported Trail completers for those years:

- 1990 (4 completers)
- 1996 (39)
- 2000 (73)
- 2003 (62)
- 2005 (62)
- 2007 (59)
- 2008 (127)
- 2010 (104)
- 2011 (61)
- 2012 (77)
- 2013 (91)
- 2014 (78)
- 2015 (150)
- 2016 (151)
- 2017 (205)
- 2018 (estimated 340-plus)

Undoubtedly, Brown and his maps have a lot to do with the increasing popularity of the Trail. Over the years since his first thru-hike “the Trail has become well-established and relatively easier to navigate,” he noted.

For that, The Colorado Trail Foundation and all those who enjoy The Colorado Trail owe him a big debt of gratitude.

COMPLETERS CELEBRATE A WALK WELL DONE

THE GADGET GIRL. It’s pretty easy to see why Betty Cook of Omaha picked up “Gadget” as her Trail name. Perhaps most notable among her “gadgets” was an umbrella attached to her pack with cords and carabiners to keep it from inverting in the wind. “I feel dorky,” she said in a Facebook post, but added “it worked well.” Clever lady. As for completing her hike in August, she posted. “Wow. Just work. As the end drew near I found myself thinking more of the incredible people I met along the way and then I thought of the spectacular scenery and the parts that scared the crap out of me. I could not have done this without the help of so many people . . . (and) I met so many incredible hikers (who) . . . made my trip so enjoyable. How many days! I will end Segments 1 and 2 in May and started at 3 on June 23. How many zero days? A lot! I enjoyed checking out the towns and meeting the locals . . . Now to eat real food and make my way back to Nebraska.”

HEART AND HOME. “I left my heart on this Trail,” Grace Waresback of Dallas posted on Facebook. “Every time I think about it, I light up. The time spent on this journey is the happiest time of my life. I miss the smells, the people, the beauty of it all. The call of the wild calls me home. The CT is home.”

BANG FOR YOUR BUCK. Kasie Taylor of Maine, who thru-hiked the Trail with her new husband, Zachary Jordan, announced on Facebook on July 27 that “Big Spoon and Moosie made it to Durango yesterday around 2 p.m. Colorado is a beautiful state that I am so lucky to have had the chance to experience by foot. Out of the three thru-hikes I’ve done, this one is the most bang for your buck. Thank you to all who provided advice, a ride, or a place to stay.”

BEST EXPERIENCE. “Finished the trail today!” Vickie Ellis Keller of Arvada post on Aug. 10. “What an adventure! Best experience I’ve ever had! Thank you to The Colorado Trail Foundation for everything you do to allow me to have this. Thank you for the volunteer workers who make this trail what it is. I will give back when I can.”

THANKFUL FOR SO MUCH. “There is so much to say about this journey that I won’t even try to capture in this post, but foremost I am thankful,” said Terry Lyons of Castle Rock, who finished his thru-hike on Aug. 4. “Thankful to all those who work diligently each year keeping this grand trail open. Thankful to my employer for giving me such a long break to make this happen. Thankful to those who supported us on this adventure, providing encouragement, getting us hotel rooms for resupply days, helping us get things such as new shoes when required. Thankful that my body healed up after my fall, allowing me to complete this to the end. Thankful for the firefighters who put out the fires that allowed the Trail to open up to the very end. Thankful for the wonderful Trail Angels providing such kindness and support. Thankful for the Trail itself and the beautiful Rocky Mountains that are right here in my backyard. But most of all, thankful to my son, Shane (Lyons), and nephew, Ryan (Hewitt), for deciding to take this on again and sticking through to the end.”

EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. “I made it!” exalted Stefano Carniglia of Boulder in a Facebook posting on Aug. 22. “What an amazing experience!! Views that went on forever, new friendships created, drinking pristine alpine water, listening to the pure silence of nature and then also at her mercy as you walk across the state 485 miles long and the vertical equivalent of three Mount Everests, almost 90,000 vertical feet! Thank you Colorado Trail, you were everything and more than I expected.”
You were everything and more than I expected. As you Colorado Trail, you were...
Step Up and Lend a Hand

Hundreds of Colorado Trail supporters help the Foundation in myriad ways each year. Here are a few of the ways you can step up and lend us a hand.

DONATE ONLINE: You can donate online on the ColoradoTrail.org website. Simply click the Donate Now button on the left side of the home page to give via a credit card or PayPal. Better yet . . .

MAKE A RECURRING GIFT: You can do this by checking the box on the donation page to “Make This Recurring (Monthly).” Many donors find that giving $10, $15, $20, or more in a regular monthly withdrawal is a much more convenient way to give.

COLORADO GIVES DAY: A program of the Community First Foundation, Colorado Gives Day, held in December each year, is aimed at increasing contributions to more than 1,600 nonprofit organizations in the state. Watch for CTF e-mails or check on Facebook for the date of this year’s event. For more information, go to ColoradoGives.org.

AMAZONSMILE: Through its AmazonSmile philanthropic program, Amazon contributes a half percent of eligible purchases to the buyer’s designated charity. Go to Smile.Amazon.com when buying through Amazon and select The Colorado Trail Foundation as your designated charity.

CT STORE: Purchase any of the Trail-related items – maps, guidebooks, clothing, tools and commemoratives – from the CTF’s online store and the profits from the sale goes to the Foundation. You can access the store through the ColoradoTrail.org home page.

LEGACY GIVING: Help ensure that the Trail will be here for future generations by including The Colorado Trail Foundation in your will or living trust. Your financial advisor, attorney or accountant can help you set up a charitable gift to the Foundation in the form of cash, stocks, bonds, or from proceeds of insurance policies or the sale of property. You can also designate the CTF as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, IRA or pension plan.

IRA REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS: Donate all or a portion of your RMD directly to the CTF (a qualifying charity) and receive an exclusion from taxable income without having to itemize deductions. Consult your tax professional about making a “qualified charitable distribution.” The CTF can provide the transfer account info to you or your investment advisor.

THANK YOU!